

Chapter 51: The Famous Panegyric of Ka'b Bin Zuhayr

[A Young Man Becomes The Governor Of Makkah](#)

In the middle of the month of Zil Qa'dah of the eighth year of migration the Prophet disposed of all the booty of Hunayn at Ji'rinah. Haj days were fast approaching and it was the first year when the polytheist Arabs and the Muslims were to perform Haj ceremonies together under the supervision of the Islamic Government of Makkah.

The participation of the Prophet in these ceremonies would add to the pomp and grandeur of Haj, and it was under his wise guidance that the true and basic propagation of Islam was to take place in that grand gathering.

However, the Prophet had to discharge some duties in the centre (Madina) also, because, after three months of his leaving that place, the matters, which should have been looked after by him personally, had remained entirely unattended. Hence, after studying all the pros and cons of the matter the Prophet considered it expedient to leave Makkah after performing 'Umrah and reach Madina as early as possible.

It was necessary that he should appoint some persons to manage the political and religious matters of the newly conquered region so that no crisis might take place in his absence and the affairs of the area might be administered properly. In view of this he appointed a forbearing and wise young man named 'Atab bin Usayd, who was not yet more than twenty years old, as the Governor of Makkah on a monthly salary of one dirham.

Thus by entrusting the Governorship of Makkah to a young man, who was newly converted to Islam, and by preferring him to many old persons, he removed the barrier of groundless fears and proved it practically that acquisition of public offices depends solely on capability, and young age should not prevent a person from attaining to highest public position and offices. The Governor of Makkah addressed a big gathering and said to them: "The Prophet has fixed my salary and in view of this I don't

stand in need of any gift or assistance from you".[1](#)

Another good selection made by the Prophet was that he appointed Mu'az bin Jabal to teach the Qur'an and the ordinances of Islam to the people. He was distinguished amongst the companions of the Prophet for his knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, jurisprudence, and the commands of Islam.

When the Prophet deputed him to Yemen in the capacity of a judge, he asked him: "On what will you rely for resolving the differences". To this he replied: "On the Book of Allah, the Qur'an". The Prophet said: "If nothing specific is found in the Book of Allah on the point at issue, on what basis will you give the judgement? "

He replied: "On the basis of the judgements of the Prophet of Allah, for I have observed your judgements in different matters and have committed them to memory. If there crops up a matter, which is similar to the one in which you have given a verdict, I shall make use of it and give judgement accordingly".

The Prophet asked for the third time: "What course will you adopt when a problem crops up about which there is nothing specific either in the Book of Allah or in my judgements?" He replied: "In such cases I shall resort to *Ijtihad* (process of deducing Islamic laws) and give a decision on the basis of the Holy Qur'an and your traditions with equity and justice".

The Prophet then said: "Thanked be Allah that He has enabled His Prophet to choose for the administration of justice a person, whose actions are commensurate with His Will".[2](#)

[Story Of Ka'b Bin Zuhayr Bin Abi Sulma](#)

Zuhayr bin Abi Sulma was one of the poets of the Age of Ignorance who had written one of the seven Mu'allaqat i.e. the masterpieces of poetry, which remained suspended on the walls of the Ka'bah for a long time before the revelation of the Qur'an, and were a source of pride and glory in the literature of the Arab world.

He died before the commencement of the prophethood of the Prophet, leaving behind two sons named Buhayr and Ka'b. Buhayr was a faithful supporter of the Prophet but Ka'b was considered to be one of his ruthless enemies. As he was endowed with a strong inherited talent (i.e. poetry) he calumniated and abused the Prophet in his verses and instigated the people to rise against Islam.

The Prophet arrived in Madina on the 24th of Zil Qa'dah. Buhayr, the brother of Ka'b had accompanied the Prophet during the conquest of Makkah and the siege of Ta'if as well as at the time of his return to Madina. He observed that the Prophet had threatened with death some poets, who were scurrilous like his brother, and who instigated people to rise against Islam, and had declared their blood to be lawful and eventually one of them had been killed, and two others had fled to some unknown destination.

Buhayr wrote a letter to his brother Ka'b informing him of the situation and in the end of the letter

mentioned, as a gesture of goodwill, that if he remained inimical towards the Prophet he would lose his life, but if he came to the Prophet and expressed regret for his activities he would be pardoned because the Prophet used to accept the repentance and regret of the wrongdoers and pardoned them.

Ka'b who had full confidence in his brother came to Madina. When he arrived in the Masjidun Nabi, the Prophet was ready to offer morning prayers. Ka'b offered prayers for the first time along with the Prophet.

Then he went and sat by his side and placing his own hand on his, said: "O Prophet of Allah! Ka'b is very much ashamed and regretful for his doings and has come now to embrace Islam. Will you accept his repentance if he comes before you personally?" The Prophet replied in the affirmative. Thereupon, Ka'b declared: "I myself am Ka'b bin Zuhayr".

In order to make amends for the past calumnies and slanders Ka'b had already composed an eloquent panegyric in praise of the Prophet.³ He recited it in the mosque before the Prophet and his companions. This marvellous panegyric is the masterpiece amongst the panegyrics of Ka'b.

Since the day it was recited before the Prophet, the Muslims have been memorizing and publishing it among others. The Muslim scholars have also written commentaries on it. This panegyric has been written in Lamiyah form⁴ and consists of fifty-eight verses.

Like the poets of the Age of Ignorance who began their panegyrics by addressing their beloved or by mentioning the ruined monuments, he begins the panegyric by remembering his cousin and beloved Sa'd. When he reaches the stage of repentance for his past bad deeds he says; "I was informed that the Prophet of Allah had threatened me, when what is desired from him is pardon and forgiveness". And then he says; "The Prophet is a "Luminous candle" under whose radiation the people receive guidance direct, and he is a "naked sword" of Allah which is always victorious"

Grief Mingled With Joy

In the end of 8 A.H. the Prophet lost his eldest daughter Zaynab. She had been married to her maternal aunt's son, Abul 'As, before the prophethood of the Prophet and had declared her belief in her father immediately after his prophethood. However, her husband continued to remain a polytheist and participated in the Battle of Badr against Islam and was taken prisoner. The Prophet released him on the condition that he would send Zaynab to Madina. Abul 'As kept his promise and sent her to Madina but the chiefs of Quraysh deputed someone to bring her back from half way.

The man so appointed managed to reach near the camel-litter of Zaynab on the way and plunged his spear into the litter. Due to excessive fear the unprotected daughter of the Prophet had a miscarriage on the way. She did not, however, give up the idea of going to Madina and reached there in an ailing condition. She spent the remaining part of her life as an invalid and breathed her last in the end of 8 A.H.

This grief turned into joy, because in the end of the same year the Prophet was favoured with a son by Marya (a slave-girl whom the Muqawqis, the Ruler of Egypt had presented to the Prophet) and he named him Ibrahim. When the mid-wife (Salma) gave the good news to the Prophet that Allah had granted him a son he gave her a valuable present. On the seventh day he sacrificed a sheep to perform the aqiqah⁵ ceremony, of the child, and cut the child's hair and gave silver of an equivalent weight in the path of Allah.

- [1.](#) Seerah-i Ibn Hisham. vol. II, page 500.
- [2.](#) Tabaqat, vol. II, page 347.
- [3.](#) Seerah-i Halabi vol. III, page 242.
- [4.](#) Every verse ends with the Arabic letter Lam i.e. L.
- [5.](#) Shaving the hair of the head.

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